

## PROTAGONIST OF TAMIL FEMALES IN PROCESSING AND MARKETING OF DRY FISH IN COASTAL VILLAGES OF JAFFNA, SRI LANKA

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### ABSTRACT

*Silent contribution of the outstanding performance of Tamil Female still face pressure in their path towards their life development, which make them a cry vibrate in North Sri Lanka. Tamil female continuously contribute largely for the different sector of development of the country. Dry fish sector significantly contributes to the agriculture sector, which earns notable contributions of foreign income. Traditionally Tamil female underwrite to fishers sector, but their protagonists in dry fish processing and marketing is important because there are the processors and marketers in the local markets. Even though their contribution is very large extent, lack of identification of their protagonist in their coastal villages. Due to the 30 years of prolonged war many fishing community have changes their livelihoods, and their protagonists have been transformed. Women in fishing sector especially in coastal villages rarely observed by the academic researchers, and the silent contribution of Tamil towards dry fish sector in coastal villages of Jaffna district was not considered as imperative. Present study combined both the qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. Data were collected from Tamil women who involved in fish processing and marketing of dry fishes in twelve fishing villages such as Madagal, Kankesanthurai, Palali, Myliddy, Thondamanaru, Velvettiturai, Point Pedro, Passaiyoor, Karainagar, Mandathivu, Navanturai and Velanai. Findings show that majority of Tamil female are poor. Fish gutting cleaning, grading drying, salting, selling and promoting are the key protagonists of Tamil female play in these selected villages. These female have many problems such as lack of support from husbands, family problems (widows, separated, lost husbands during war time), racial marginalization, gender based violence, poor access to bank loans, low returns from dry fish sales. There are many recommendations given from the research findings to the policy makers and the women based organizations for Tamil society to develop a room for women empowerment in the dry fish processing and marketing.*

**KEYWORDS:** Tamil Females, Processing and Marketing, Dry Fish, Coastal Villages & North Sri Lanka

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### INTRODUCTION

Women play important protagonists in fish grading and handling of fish marketing in local markets (Nauen, 1986; Gracy, 1998), women have many potentials but they do not have rights and chance to explore them in many community. Tamil female's protagonists in processing and marketing of dry fish were traditionally important because they have been supporting fishermen as spouses, and handles all most of the fish processing activities in domestic market, as well as the domestic markets in Sri Lanka. Identifying their protagonist is important for supporting them for many reasons (Ushalenka, Sucheta Agarwal, 2017).

Due to 30 years of civil war traditional fishing sector and the protagonist of Tamil, women in this sector were transformed. Tamil women have to work hard for their families, they became as dominant head of families to nurture their children. Generally female in fishing sector were from unhappy families, participate actively in fishery activities, including, fishing cleaning, drying and marketing of dry fishes. However, the lower status of Tamil female in many coastal villages in Sri Lanka means that their contributions and potentials are underrated or unrecognized.

The fisheries sector in Sri Lanka plays a vigorous protagonist in economic and social life by providing direct and indirect employment opportunities for about 560,000 people and livelihoods for more than 2.7 million coastal communities. Importantly it provides more than 60% of animal protein requirement of people in the country. The fisheries industry can mainly be divided into coastal, offshore/deep sea, and inland and aquaculture sub sectors. In 2016, the share of fisheries to the Gross domestic Production (GDP) of the country was 1.3 % (CBSL, 2016). For this above-mentioned contribution. Tamil women have been working to reduce the regional disparities, but unfortunately still, they are many people under poverty, lower income from Income Generating Activities (IGAs).

For the reason of the prolonged war, basic livelihood of fishing community in North Sri Lanka distorted due to many oblige. With the vat problems on fishing and the other marine based production, fishing community work for their day to day fishing activities, as it is their basic and source for income. traditionally female have been involve with the shore based activities such as net repairing, fish handling(shorting, grading, weighting, gutting, and icing), fish trade, distribution and processing. In some coastal villages, some are involving with fishing, seaweed collection, fish cleaning, marketing and prawn seed collection in addition to the traditional protagonist in fishing.

Involvement of Tamil women in any kind of fishing activity other than household work was rarely observed. Involvement of women in all development events including agriculture sector is seen as a priority in development model. Moreover, special emphasis should be given to ensure contribution of Tamil females in fishery expansion activities to raise the family income leading to better standard of living. in fact suitable profession for the women in fishery sector are fish cleaning, cutting, drying, salting, grading, packing, and the likes. It is necessary to understand the present status of Tamil female involved in dry fish processing and marketing. Although a few research has been conducted on dry fish processing and marketing (Fazlulkabir Rabbane, Sanoara Yasmin, 2011; Sheela Immanuel and Syda Rao, 2009; Chand and Nityananda, 2002)

Albeit women play vital Protagonist in fisheries activities in coastal communities, their protagonists have been given its proper place like men. Women are involved in fisheries in order to generate revenue that will sustain family values, using marketing, and processing of fish, which is crucial to enhancing nutritional value and food security. Women should be encouraged to participate fully in fisheries activities by establishing cooperative society (Cliffe and Akinrotimi, 2015). This research focuses on the protagonists if Tamil female in dry fish processing and marketing of dry fish in coastal villages in Jaffna.

To best of the knowledge of the researcher, no research has been done, so far on the contribution of Protagonists of Tamil female in dry fish processing and marketing of dry fish in coastal villages of Jaffna. In this milieu, this study aimed at highlighting Tamil female's contribution in processing and marketing of dry fish in Jaffna. Outcome of this study will contribute to empower women involve in fishery sector of north Sri Lanka.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

- To classify the Protagonists of Tamil female in processing and marketing of dry fish
- To identify the Income Generating Activities of Sample respondents
- To recognize the problems of Tamil women involving in dry fish processing and marketing
- To give ideas to solve the downsides identified in this research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Traditionally fishing was considered as male activity and female contributed during their leisure times to support their spouses. They collected fish shallow water in lagoon. They support male fishers to catch fishes, mainly they involved in fishing activities for their consumption, excess of fishes were salted, dried and kept to manage at seasonal scarcity. Women did not fish in deep sea, lagoon water, but mostly they repair nets, and supports to fish post harvesting, processing and Marketing. After prolonged war, Tamil in 'cleared' and 'un-cleared' areas engage in fishery related activities. In these communities contribution of these female is remarkable and reputable (Dharmeretnam and Tamilchelvi, 2003).

Women have been recorded as contributors in fishery related activities around the world. Especially in the coastal environment, where these activities are classified majority in three ways; fishing, processing, and marketing (Olufayo, 2012). even though They are working in coastal villages (Navak, 2000), and contribution national development, their protagonist is repeatedly being ignored and demoted due to the racial marginalization and the ignorance of rural people in developing countries (Ibrahim e al, 2011). Female in rural areas always actively participate in traditional fishing related activities. They play significant protagonist either support their spouses or play a major protagonist in administrating their families (IFAD, 2008;Ekpo, 2013).

Fish processing are done by the female, to improve the quality and taste, through the series of process to satisfy the consumer preferences (Lwenya and Abila, 2000). Female service to different processing methods among which are cleaning, salting, smoking, salting. The main problem in fish processing is female participations are not correctly recorded and presented as national contribution; it is a kind of under- represented (Common Wealth, GTZ, 2007). Most of the women spend time in doing their household work like cooking and take care of children. Some cultural boundaries do not allow female to freely work for their future and show the inner talents. They are allowed to just get married to produce and take of children (FAO, 2012).

Due to civil war, Tamil female have to break these cultural boundaries and they have to work for their families because they have taken as counter protagonist in families since their spouses dead. low level education and the compulsory situation to have a work most female participate in fish processing activities, they are able to access some soft loans, which enable them to facilitate in fish processing activities (Van De Ban, 2004). Even they are working in fishing sector there is lack of proper training on fish processing in both locally and nationally, to improve the fish processing activities.

Lower level of female participation in any sector lead to negative impact on fishing community, as this results may families are food insecure, poor health, malnutrition, early marriage, ultra-poverty, and high school dropout ratio as a result of low income (FAO, 2012). Women involve in pre-harvest activities in fisheries as preparing of boats and making food for spouse cleaning nets and repairing nets, which supports to male fishers all over the world. The financial assistant

given to the women in many villages they are able to support in pre harvesting as well as post harvesting activities (Overra, 1992). women play multiple protagonist as household worker at homes and supports in pre harvesting and post harvesting activities and they are not allowed to go for fishing due to the physical nature of offshore or near shore fishing activities, but in some villages they involve in fish catching activities with male (Rana and V.Q, 2002). They are working in aqua culture farm together with their children and they catch fishes, produce fingerlings, manage ponds and feed the fishes. Women integrate these tasks with other non-farm activities like tending farm animals, and cultivating crops to supports families (ibid).

Livelihood activities of female are relegated and mostly affected when aquatic resources are tainted and exhausted (Rana, et al, 2002). Husbands of many female stay away home for a long period to catch fishes, females have to manage all the housekeeping activities and take over the responsibilities of children and processing and marketing of fishes (Overa, 1992). In Sri Lanka women play major protagonist in all sectors and as the regulator of money in fishing industry (Sriwarena, 2001). Among the refugee fishing families female play an important part in fish sorting, cutting, and processing and. In Northern and northwestern coastal region and on the east coast women engage in alike activities. In some villages women engage in fishing with beach-seines, in the same region a few women own beach seines and boats, and others are involved in fish processing and marketing.

In fishing communities as estimated 25% of the women are engaged in activities related to fishing, activities formally and informally. In most cases female do marketing and processing as unpaid family labor. Women are involved in supervising and marketing their catches, especially in areas on the west coast where there is principal bottom restriction net fishing.

Female play vital role in fisheries activities as producers, assistants, to men preservers, traders and financiers. Female assist in emptying nets, shorting, gutting, and cleaning, drying, salting, smoking, and they are involved in storage and marketing of fish and smoked fishes. Most of the female in the various fishing communities are uneducated, have little or no say in decision making in areas that affects their livelihood (Bako, 2005).

## METHODOLOGY

This Study contained both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to collect data. Empirical survey was used to collect the quantitative data and desk study was used to review the relevant literatures. The population of this study is the Tamil female cluster who involve in fish processing and marketing of dry fish in Jaffna District. Stratified sampling methods as used to select 250 respondents for this study. This study confined twelve fishing villages (Madagal, Kankesanthurau, Palali, Myliddy, Thondamanaru, Velvettiturai, Point Pedro, Passaiyoor, Karinagar, Mandathivu, Velanai, and Navanthurai) of Jaffna, Northern Sri Lanka. The above mentioned villages are the representation of the fishing community of Jaffna. Primary data were collected through qualitative and Qualitative methods. Under quantitative data collection method data were collected through structured questionnaires, for qualitative data collection in-depth interviews and PRA (Participatory Rural Approach), techniques were used. Qualitative data were collected via 10 in depth interviews with selected Tamil females having their livelihood as dry fish processing and marketing in coastal villages in Jaffna district.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Quantitative data were collected from 250 female in 12 villages. Qualitative data were collected from 10 in depth interviews, and Participatory rural approach as to collect the data. Study identified that education level of the female respondents is very poor and most of them do not completed at least primary education. Many Tamil female are widows. They want to continue their traditional livelihood as their husbands organized.

**Table 1: Coastal Villages of Sample Respondents**

Coastal Villages	No	%
Madagal	20	8
Kankesanthurai,	22	8.8
Palali,	16	6.4
Thondamanaru,	29	12
Myliddy,	15	6.1
Velvettiturai,	23	9.2
Passaiyoor,	26	10.4
Point Pedro	17	6.8
Velanai	17	6.8
Mandathivu	22	8.8
Karimnagar,	20	8.1
Navanturai	22	9.2
Total	249	100

*Source: survey of present study*

It is evident from the table 1 that the total number of respondents in different village. Most of them from (12%) Thondamamaru village.

**Table 2: Age Profile of the Respondents**

Age Group	Freq
<15	6.2%
15-25	12.3%
26-35	23.6%
36-45	34%
46-55	14.2%
56 +	9.7 %

*Source: field survey*

Table 2 shows the age profile of the Tamil Female engage in dry fish processing and marketing. Highest frequency falls in 36-45(34%), 23.6% of female have 26-35 age, 14.2% of the respondents have 46-55 age, 12.3% of the female have 12-25 age, and there are 9.7 5 of female have greater than 56 age, and 6.2 % of female under 15 age, also involve in dry fish processing and marketing.

**Table 3: Demographic Analysis of Respondents**

	(%)
Primary education	9.2
Grade 8	4.8
Widows	35.2
Non married	24.8
Married	79.2
Lost husband	9.2
Children (3-5)	31.2
Children (1-2)	18.7

Table 3: Contd.,	
No children	3.6
Fish processing as main livelihood	39.6
Have additional livelihoods	30.4

*Source: Field study*

It is obvious from the table 3, that the most of Tamil Female are married (79%), and 39.6% of them have fish processing as their main livelihood, 35% of the female are widows, and 10% of them lost their husbands. 31% of the total female have 3-5 number of children, and 18.7% of the female have 1-2 children. few of them (9%) have Primary education, and 4.8% completed their grade 8 education. 30% of the female have additional livelihood to manage their day to day income.

### PROTAGONISTS OF TAMIL FEMALE IN DRY FISH PROCESSING AND MARKETING

Table 4 shows the protagonist of female in dry fish processing and marketing. For the fish processing protagonist most of them (87%) involve in fish cleaning, 76% of the female involve in fish sorting, and grading, 89% of them involve in family support, 21% of them involve in gutting, 30% of them involve in drying fish, 27% of them involve in salting fish. for marketing protagonists of dry fish, most of the women involve (55%) on Promotional activities, 17.6% involve in packing of dry fish, 21.6% of the female involve in selling, 13.6% of the female involve in pricing of dry fish, and 4.8% of them involve in distributing dry fish to retailers and other customers.

**Table 4: Protagonists of Tamil Female in Fish Processing and Marketing of Dry Fish**

Fish Processing	(Freq)%
Fish catching	4.8
Cleaning	87.2
Gutting	21.6
Drying	30.4
Salting fish	27.6
Family support	89.2
Sorting and Grading	76.4
Marketing	
Packaging	17.6
Selling	21.6
Pricing	13.6
Promoting	5.1
Distributing to retailers	4.8

*Source: field survey*

The silent protagonists of Tamil female in north not considered as significant in nautical sector of Sri Lanka. Thousands of female in rural villages in Jaffna are suffering from poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, malnutrition, sexual violence and the other consequences of war for a prolonged period. Most of the female continue some livelihoods, which were started by their husbands. They play major protagonists in dry fish processing and marketing in coastal villages of Jaffna though they suffer from many problems.

The activities, which they follow, can vary depending on the type of dried fish being produced. For the traditional dried style this involves a meticulous routine of cleaning, gutting, boiling, salting, and laying out the fish to dry. This fishes are also smoked. This is tough work and arduous. The female are required to be on their feet all day or hunched over buckets. When smoking fish, they are force to watch the fire for hours on end –despite that heat, despite the flames ending

up in their eyes. In addition without enough and adequate equipment, the work takes even longer. However even accounting for the arduous physical labor it entails a typical day in dried fish production is hardly so simple, and near impossible to approximate. This is because the industry is affected by so many variable that are beyond the control of the women who allow it to function. This study has the purpose to identify the protagonists of Tamil female in dry fish processing and marketing. This study found that many female workers are involving in dry fish processing and marketing of coastal villages of Jaffna district. These Tamil female have been taken many protagonists in this responsibility such as.

### **Cutting and Cleaning**

When the angler catch fish it contains lots of dirt, clay and things are mixed with the fishes. Tamil female play a main protagonists in cleaning these dirt from the caught fishes. Tamil female play as significant protagonists as the main supporter in the family they help their husbands and fathers in cleaning of fishes. Many female go for work as a way work hand for cleaning fishes at the anglers' houses at day pay. Female employees at the anglers' houses clean fishes before sorting drying and selling them to the market. At the in-depth interview a female employee said that,

*“I lost my husband during war period; I don't know where he is? I have two daughters, they are studying t schools, I am working at fishermen's houses to clean fishes, they pay me daily wages, like me there are many female working as day worker for fish cleaning. Employers pay us and they give us some good fishes for cooking”*

*(Transcripts 3: Line 32-36)*

There are some female continuously working over nights to earn money for their children.

*“We are marginalized due to our traditional job as fishing, but my son is studying at University...I am working hard to manage our monthly expenditure. Fish cleaning is important work we do in dry fish selling, we need endurance to clean fish its very irritating, and we have to work hard, because we do not know other works. If we are lucky, they bring the fish in the morning and we work until eight or night in the night to finish”*

*(Transcript 2: line 12-16)*

### **Sorting and Grading**

Sorting and grading is another important protagonists the Tamil female play in dry fish processing and marketing. Women have experience in sorting and grading of caught fishes. According to the quality of fishes, which are categorized into grades as its price and its eligibility to be processed as dry fish, Sorting and grading is facilitating marketing functions. Dry fishes are exported to foreign market, retailers' demand quality dry fish for exportation. Size, processing methods, salting and drying methods also determine the quality of dry fish. Therefore, fisher women are expected to do this standardization before drying. Fisher women don't have any training on fish sorting and grading, according to the instructions given by the fishermen they do this protagonists.

Different consumers expects different quality of dry fish. Based on the buying capacity of consumers, the quality varies, it has been noted that fishers suffers from a lack of technology for shorting process of fishes in coastal villages. Fisher female are sorting and grading the fishes manually, it takes long hours to standardize fishes before drying.

*“There is no scientific technology to sort or grade it, according to the knowledge on demand for dry fish and the price for dry fish we just .....divide it size.....I have to work until the fish is hung and dry. I have no choice “*

*(Transcript1: Line 9-13)*

Female living in these coastal villages have anxiety on their future life and they have expectation of good life for their children.

*“My father does fishing. I help him for fish processing and marketing. I have been involving grading since I was small. My father is the one who took me to the field for drying and taught me how to separate fishes and how to hold the reaping hook and hoe to grade it and dry. He is the one who took me to the field and taught me to all these details. how to catch small fishes, pawns using nets in sea side, my father and my mother taught me how to do sorting and drying fishes and now my mother studying at schools...but I don't think whether my daughter will continue this protagonists at our villages”.*

*(Transcripts 2: Line 21-28)*

## **Drying**

Drying is also another protagonists played by the Tamil females in coastal villages in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. It is a key activity in dry fish industry, which determine the quality of dry fish. Wives, children and other female members in fishing families do drying. it has been observed that the female respondents said that their spouses catch fishes and they dry them on the roof, they make some yard lines to dry fishes, or they go beside the sea and then during daytime. Some of the spread the fishes on mats and dry them at their own houses or anglers' houses. Few of them use smoking as a way to dry fishes. There is no technology to dry fishes to maintain standardization in quality. They realize that they need additional money for smoking to dry fishes. However drying through traditional methods have some drawbacks and reduce the quality of dry fishes. Most of the female usually dry fishes manually, and they have to cover the fishes during the drying process to protect from the dust, dirt and birds to keep the quality of dry fish. Dry fish industry is held up not by men but by women, mothers, daughters, wives, widows and other females. In the seaside villages of Jaffna, these women comprise a trade. When fishes have been delivered by 9.00 am but the drying process was not completed until the following morning. When this happens, the women are forced to stay up all night.

To start there are no working hours. Once the fish arrive, the women have a limited amount of time to complete the drying process, which act as natural preservatives. If they took too long to tend to the fish without properly refrigerating or cooling, the fish will spoil and rot, therefore the women work non-stop, from the time the fish are delivered until the time the drying is complete. They work not commercially but as part of dry fish industry, clusters of women drying fish by hand in front and back yards of each other's home.

One of the respondent said that she has been drying fishes since her childhood.

*“Earlier when I went with my mother to dry fishes at beside the sea it took whole day. Now when I taught my husband, we manage to dry fishes at our home, my husband has his own land to dry fishes. We do more works at home while we are drying fishes, my mother id, scolding me not to stay idle and do this that has worked out in my favor now. When she taught me, I acted out of anger and remained idle whenever she took a break.*



*However, what she taught me by scolding me, I know it now. Now I know why she taught me by scolding me I know it now. Now I know why she so strictly taught me how to work in whole day...i am making use of that now. Now I can do double, triple the amount of work”*

*(Transcripts 4: Line 9-14)*

Extended unseasonal rainfall can be detrimental to the dried fish cottage industry absent any electric heating or dehydrating technology, relies on sunlight to preserve the fish. Such rainfall can put the women who rely on this work out of business for weeks or months on end.

*“it is very hard for us to do this work if it rains, may fishes have gone as waste when rain showers start, Even if it rains once I finish but before the fish have been in the sun for two or three days, they will be reined”*

*(Transcripts 3: Line 9-13)*

### **Salting**

Salting is also an essential function in dry fish sector, normally female have experience in salting fishes. After cleaning and grading fishes are mixed with salt before drying. Usually female do this function. Main purpose of salting is to avoid rotting fishes overnight. Normally they start dry fish processing at the morning it takes long hours for cleaning and grading, to protect the fishes get rotten, fishers mix salt with the fishes.

Women of these coastal villages ideally begin work early in the morning, when fish by the hundred and sometimes thousands are delivered to their homes by local anglers in the backs of their small Lorries. They work in groups the range from two to six people, depending on the size of the delivery; the women unload the fish and lay them out tarps outside. Then they get into work for salting fishes. A woman said that she is suffering from special disease on her hand due to these salting, what she has been doing more than sixty years.

*“Since my childhood I was supposed to do this job, we lost father I have six siblings, my mother buy fishes from fishermen and make them as dry fish, we sell it to the dry fish retailers at very lower price. we need to work hard to manage our family m=needs....there are many cheaters at dry fish marketing, we received very lower margins ...my mother always fight with the buyers but, if we fight with them next time they will avoid to buy from us.....others are willing to offer at lower price than ours.”*

*(Transcripts 7: Line 33-39)*

### **Packaging**

It has been reported that the sample respondents generally use Palmira leave made baskets, plastic baskets, bamboo-made baskets, paper baskets for packaging fishes to transport to market. Normally retailers buy the dry fishes at their processing sites, and then they will package it for local as well as foreign markets. Female felt that the price of dry fish is much higher than at the super markets and local retailers.

Packaging cost is high; therefore, dry fish processors prefer to sell them at the wholesale price. Some women travel all the way from their villages to the market and sell the dry fishes. Some of them pack with plastic bags and distribute them to the retail stores.

*We travel from our home village to the town to sell dry fishes, some time we cannot get the expected price, due to the quality of dry fishes, retailers avoid to buy...and the demand at very cheapest price. we know that our dry fishes are exported to foreign market by the retailers, and they receive more profits, we argue with them but they never accept ...we do not have any new method to pack the dry fishes...we need training for these. We do not know how to market our dry fishes. We need training for these. We do not know how to market our dry fishes. We need training for these. We do not know how to market our dry fishes at maximum yield."*

*(Transcript 5: line 17-24)*

### **Selling**

Selling is a major protagonist in marketing of dry fish. From the sample respondents, it has been reported that women walk along the roads for long hours and sell the dry fishes. They are unable to sell it at their expected price. Women feel that they spend much time to sell the dry fishes. They are not able to manage others works. Therefore dry fish processors prefer to sell the dry fishes to retailers who can market them at maximum price in the retail market, many retailers export dry fishes to foreign markets after packaging them with attractive packaging materials. It has been further notes that retailers exploit these poor female dry fish processors' margin and only pay them very lower margins.

*"most of the dry fishes are exported to abroad, we have good demand for quality dry fish, the demand for dry fish comes from retailers and exporters... but they demand at lower margins, we think that promoting and selling are most difficult components in dry fish sector "*

*(Transcript 7: line 28-31)*

### **Promotions**

Few women involve in promotion of dry fishes. They do not have adequate knowledge to promote and market their dry fishes, normally women visits to markets and consumers' places to promote dry fishes. They do not use any printed materials to promote their dry fishes. There is no identified brands on dry fish. It has been noted that promoting and selling are the difficult task for female. Most of them stopped these activities but few of them practicing it to survive in the local market.

*"we walk around the streets for long hours, often we bring our children. Consumers attitude has been changes they do not believe door to door delivery, we can't promote dry fish. my mother dis well, but I can't people seek for good packing at supermarkets. Retailers do this and they earn much, we should have assistants for marketing of fry fish. if we have knowledge to market, we hope that we can earn more yield..."*

*(Transcript7: line 18-27)*

## **PROBLEMS OF TAMIL FEMALE PROCESSING AND MARKETING OF DRY FISHES**

Tenacious poverty and worsening economic conditions have forced many women from poor rural households to work outside their homes, they volunteered into wide ranging economic activities while at the same time continuing to perform, their traditional household duties (Swami Nathan, 2011). Exploiting in women capabilities and allowing them to work out their choice is not only appreciated itself but also unquestionable way to contribute to the economic growth and development (UNDP, 2008).

Women are both dry fish processors and sellers and they are living below the poverty line. They face many challenges including lack of access to modern dry fish processing equipment, funds, financial literacy, good business practices and housing. The families especially children are seriously affected, by this poverty. Their children trade with them than go to school; they have lack of nutrition, clothing, love and care.

**Table 5: Problems Faced by Tamil Female Involved in Dry Fish Processing and Marketing**

Problems	%
<b>Social Problems</b>	
Gender based violence	83.2%
Sexual harassment	63.4%
Marginalization	79.4%
Cultural restrictions	68.2%
Lack of education	54.8%
Personal and health related issue	66.7%
No time to look after children	66.5%
Undertaking many responsibilities without the support of spouse (men do not take supportive protagonists, Widow, separated, lost husband)	86.3%
<b>Economic Problems</b>	
Lack of access to bank loan	89.2%
Higher interest rate for micro credit loans	71.6%
Unreliable income	70.4%
No control over resources	57.6%
Low profit margin	78.2%
Lack of alternative employment opportunities	82.3%
<b>Dry Fish Processing and Marketing Problems</b>	
Poor infrastructure facilities	72.2%
Lack of knowledge in marketing and selling	86.2%
Retailers involvement	81.6%
Lack of training on fish value chain process	70.4%
Traditional methods of processing	77.6%
Low bargaining power	82.1%
Lack of innovative equipment and methods for processing	85.6%

*Source: field survey*

Table 5 shows the problems faced by the female involve in dry fish processing and marketing. Undertaking many responsibilities without the support of spouse (men do not take supportive protagonists), widow, separated, lost husband) (86.3%), lack of innovative equipment and method for processing (85.6%). low bargaining power (82.1%), lack of knowledge in marketing and selling (86.2 %), Gender based violence (83.2%), marginalization(79.4%), lack of access to bank loan (89.2%), are the most severe problems. traditional methods of processing (77.6%), lack of training on fish value chain process (70.4%), poor infrastructure facilities(72.2%), low profit margin(78.2%), were mentioned as serious problems. Due to these problems sample respondents are underprivileged of their basic rights and opportune information and agonize from poor livelihood as fish processing and marketing of lively hood.

## **LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

The prolonged war affected women and men differently. Women were the most affected by the loss of family member, death and disappearance of income earners, migration of family members. The more affluent Tamil Population in north fled the conflict areas (FAO, 2012).

Women protagonists in agriculture expanded during the conflict period due to absence of males, increasing poverty and demand for cheap female labor. In the north region for example, casual wage labor provides income for female

-headed households. Internally displace women who relocated in agricultural areas also engage in wage labor. Women in fishing communities do fish processing, marketing, net making, and net repair. Table:6 shows that income generating livelihood activities of sample respondents. 87% of female involve in dry fish processing, 76% of the female engage in marketing of dry fish. These respondents already have one or two additional livelihood activities to manage their day-to-day expenditures. 65% of female are doing poultry. 33% of them are engaging in Palmyra leave based product making. 45% of the female engage in goat rearing, and 34% female go for house cleaning during the off seasons. 13% of female are doing trading other products, and 8.2% of them are doing sewing as their additional livelihood.

**Table 6: Income-Generating Activities of the Sample Respondents**

Activities	Fre(%)
Dry fish processing	87.2%
Marketing	76.4%
Poultry	65.2%
Palmyra leave based product making	33.1%
goat rearing	45.3%
House cleaning (labor work)	34.2%
Trading	13.1%
Sewing	8.2%

*Source: field survey*

*\*Respondents answered more than one option*

During the years of conflict, local and international NGOs provided women especially widows and families who lost income earners, with the opportunity for income generation through micro and small-scale projects. Livestock rearing, petty trading and home gardening projects have been initiated for women. More recently International and local Government organizations trained women in nontraditional occupations. Women in Jaffna are skilled making cement blocks, they are trained in industrial sewing with which skill they obtained employment in the formal sector.

## CONCLUSIONS

The majority of the families of Tamil female are poor and small-scale fishers. Fishing is a male activity, especially where they involve boats, equipment and long absence at sea. However, women, also play key protagonists in maintaining equipment, processing and marketing of dry fish. Women's protagonists are often less acknowledged. Their poverty included more than just income, it includes lack of supports from the male partners (disappearance, divorce, widow), and gender based violence, lack of new technology for cleaning and drying fishes, lower profit margins, low bargaining power, lack of training on fish value chain processing. Women who became heads of households due to loss of their spouses are the most visible category of women victims of the conflicts, who engage in dry fish processing and marketing. Desertion, Separation, and divorce also resulted in female-headed households. Women are head of households in instances where the spouse migrated. The inability of the spouse to engage in Income Generation Activities pushed women to become principle income earners in dry fish processing and marketing.

## Policy Implications

Tamil women's contributions to fisheries are often overlooked, under-estimated, and/or undervalued. While in many contexts, primarily men who go out to sea to catch fish, and women participate in cleaning, sorting, grading, salting, promoting selling, packing and marketing.

Pre-harvest activities commonly undertaken by women include mending of nets, gathering of bait, and preparation of food for fishing trips. Post-harvest activities, which are often dominated by women, including carrying fish from shore, and dry fish processing activities. As traders of fish, women build patron-client relations that provide these women with unique knowledge regarding upcoming seafood demands and thus exploitation patterns overtime, women support fishing operations by managing household activities, such as cleaning home, feeding the family, and take care of children while the husbands are away on fishing trips. There are some policy implications suggested from this study for improving the life of Tamil women involving dry fish processing and marketing.

**Alternative Livelihood Income Generating Activities (LIGAs):** Tamil female involve in dry fish processing and marketing. Since the non-availability or non-accessibility to other alternative livelihood activities, they have been working hard to get lower payments. Most women in fishing community lack in capital, land ownership compare to men. In dry processing sector, also, they are paid less, but they are continuing works to economically protect their families. In Fisher familiars these female are not considered as a human resource, there inputs are marginalized and ignored its value. There are many female face gender based, sexual based violence during their employments and even at homes. If they have enough access to alternative LIG. As they can bargain with the dry fish processers and can fix their wages as valued.

**Financial Access and New Business Opportunities:** In the fishing community of Jaffna district, women often utilize locally managed micro credit funds, which are only provided for activities that generate income, reduce poverty, and promote development, to start vegetable and livelihood farming, shop keeping, and to add value to fish products by initiating their own wholesale fish businesses instead of selling to intermediaries. This has empowered women in coastal villages, but there should be more consideration on interest rate and flexible policy in bank loans should be introduce to support their new business ideas, related and non-related to dry fish processing and marketing.

**Policies on Gender Based Violence:** Women based organizations should monitor whether the policies are implemented and actions are taken against the incidences at the coastal villages. There should be a monitoring mechanism for family based violence against women.

**Women Network for Best Practices:** Create a north region of network of women in all sector linked with fisheries community of Jaffna district improve the visibility of women in this sector and establish a platform for the exchange of best practices.

**Empowering Women an Encourage them to Participate Decision-Making:** Women affected by disasters are particularly susceptible. Their knowledge is hardly recognized, though they have valuable ideas on how to improve the maintainable use of marine resources. Women are poorly represented in decision-making places and control protagonists in fisheries. Women based organizations should identify their potentials and make them empowered through continuous training sessions.

**Infrastructure Development and Capacity Building:** fish harvesting policies often focused on industrialization and urbanization facilities. Due these actions have been taken by the policy makers Tamil women are marginalized even pushed out from many sector. Women should be informed about policies, their rights. Infrastructure developments, capacity-building Programs in villages allow the Tamil female to improve their capacity in dry fish processing sector.

**Gender Integration in Value Chain of Dry Fish Sector:** women are involved in all steps in aqua sector. They have been involving many activities from pre harvesting arrangement to post sales research in dry fish processing and

marketing. They play significant protagonists in dry fish sector. Understanding values chains of dry fish industry can help to discover where women are involved and how they can benefit interventions along the chain. To maximize the benefits from dry fish processing and marketing, women should be involved with each value chain processing activity, and key areas in marketing.

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